



TAWHĪD

And Our Duty to Our Parents

[And [recall]] when We took the covenant from Banī Isrā'īl, [enjoining upon them], "Worship none except Allah and be good to [your] parents" [Al-Baqarah: 83]. [Worship Allah, and associate nothing with Him, and be good to [your] parents] [An-Nisā': 36]. [Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him and that [you] be good to [your] parents] [Al-An'ām: 151]. [And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him and [that you] be good to [your] parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "ugh," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small"] [Al-Isrā': 23-24]. [And We have enjoined upon man goodness to [his] parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do] [Al-'Ankabūt: 8].

TAWHD

AND OUR DUTY TO OUR PARENTS

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good...

(Surah Al Baqarah 2:83)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good,
(Surah An Nisā' 4:36)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, ...

(Surah Al An'ām 6:151)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small."
(Surah 17:23-24)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.
(Surah Al 'Ankabūt 29:8)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice." And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.
(Surah Luqman 31:13-15)

In these verses, good treatment of one's parents follows the order of tawhīd and the prohibition of treating them wickedly follows the prohibition of shirk!

Narrated by Abū Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) that,

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said three times,

“Shall I not inform you of the greatest of major sins?” The Sahābah replied, “Yes, O Rasūlullāh.” He said, “Associating partners with Allah and wicked treatment of one's parents”
(Saheeh Bukhari)

Narrated by Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) that,

He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said,

“The approval of the Lord is in the approval of one's father and the anger of the Lord is in the anger of one's father”
(At Tirmidhi)

It was also reported by the Tābiṭ Wahb Ibn Munabbih that, Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) asked his Lord (سبحانه وتعالى),

“O Lord, with what do you order me?” He replied, “That you do not associate any partners with Me.” He asked, “And with what else?” He replied, “That you be dutiful to your mother.” He asked, “And with what else?” He replied, “That you be dutiful to your mother.” He asked, “And with what else?” He replied, “That you be dutiful to your mother”
(Az Zuhd – Imām Ahmad)

So how can the muwahhid ignore this obligation and commit the major sin second to shirk by treating his parents wickedly? And how can the muwahhid not thank them, speak good words to them, and accompany them with kindness? This kind treatment is obligatory even if they might be sinful, and even if they order him with sin!

But the muwahhid should always remember that he is obliged not to obey his parents in what entails disobedience of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) as ordered by these.

Narrated by Ali Ibn Abi Talib (رضي الله عنه) that,

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

“There is no obedience to anyone in disobedience of Allah. Obedience is only in good”

(Bukhārī & Muslim)

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) that,

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

“Upon the Muslim is to listen and obey in regards to what he likes and dislikes, except if he is ordered with sin. If he is ordered with sin, then there is no listening nor obedience [in sin]

(Bukhārī & Muslim)

Amongst the major sins that many parents order their children with is the abandonment of the fard ‘ayn jihād (jihād which is obligatory upon each and every individual).

They intentionally or unintentionally distort the meaning of various ahādīth on the obligation to obtain the permission of one’s Muslim parents before performing fard kifāyah jihād (jihād which is an obligation on the Ummah as a whole but not obligatory upon each and every individual). These ahādīth should be understood in light of other evidences.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in His book,

Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people."

(Surah At Tawbah 9:24)

This āyah refers to a jihād that is not excused by obeying one's parents. The scholars have unanimously explained that such jihād is the fard 'ayn jihād.

Ibn Qudāmah (رحيم الله) said,

"If jihād becomes obligatory upon him then the permission of his parents is not taken into consideration because the jihād has become fard 'ayn and abandonment of it is a sin. There is no obedience to anyone in disobedience of Allah. Similarly, is the case of hajj, jamā'ah prayer, Friday prayer, travel for seeking obligatory knowledge.

Imam Al Awzā'ī (رحيم الله) said,

'There is no obedience to the parents in abandonment of obligations, Friday prayer, hajj, and jihād, because they are acts of worship that became obligatory upon him as an individual. So, the permission of parents is not taken into consideration just like prayer.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in His book,

And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House - for whoever is able to find thereto a way.

(Surah Āl 'Imrān 3:97)

He did not make the permission of parents a condition"

(Al Mughnī)

Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) said,

“If the enemy plans to attack the Muslims, then repelling him becomes obligatory upon all those intended for by the attack and upon those not intended for by the attack, so that they support them, just as

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in His book,

And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help,
(Surah Al Anfāl 8:72)

and just as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) ordered to support the Muslims”
(Majmū’ Al Fatāwā)

The scholars mentioned numerous cases that make jihād against the kuffār fard ‘ayn, including the invasion of the Muslims’ lands, the imprisonment of Muslims, the imminent threat of attack against the Muslims, and the faceoff of the opposing armies.

So how can one ignore this clear-cut obligation now and be satisfied with submission to his lower self? How can one claim to be a muwahhid while preferring one’s parents to Allah in love and obedience when the essence of tawhīd is preferring Allah to everyone and everything else in love and obeying Him – the Creator – even if it entails disobedience of all of the creation.

Ibn Abī Hātim (رحيم الله) reported in his tafsīr that,

Amr Ibn Yazīd Al Khawlānī and Ibn ‘Awn from amongst the Salaf (رحيم الله) – when asked by individuals for advice on performing jihād while their parents disapproved – would merely recite,

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in His book,

Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people."

(Surah At Tawbah 9:24)

That was their ijtihād in a time when most jihād was fard kifāyah. How much more applicable is their answer when the jihād is fard ‘ayn, as is the case today!

Rather, there is no difference that the one who abandons jihād under any pretext when it is fard ‘ayn has committed a major sin and fallen into a branch of hypocrisy.

Another mistake that some muwahhidīn commit after Allah has guided them is that they become abusive of their parents when advising them, when calling them to the truth, when enjoining good on them, and when forbidding them from evil,

Whereas Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) ordered Mūsā and Hārūn (عليه السلام) to advise Fir‘awn with gentle words.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in His book,

Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."

(Surah Tāhā 20:43-44)

These verses indicate that when one gives da'wah – in general – it should be done with gentle words...How much more so is the case when the recipients are one's parents? And how much more so when they are Muslims!

Abū Dāwūd (رحيم الله) said he heard,

“Imām Ahmad (رحيم الله) being asked about a man whose mother performs prayer and wudū’ poorly. He said, ‘He should tell her and teach her.’ He was told, ‘She refuses to have him teach her and says, ‘I am older than you and you want to teach me!’ So, do you think he should boycott her or beat her for this?’ He replied, ‘No, but he should teach her and tell her.’ He then started ordering him to tell her kindly”
(Masā’il Abū Dāwūd)

Harb Al Kirmānī (رحيم الله) said, he asked Ishāq Ibn Rāhawayh (رحيم الله),

“Should a man enjoin good upon his parents and forbid them from evil?” He replied,

“He should admonish them kindly. And he should not do so publicly.”

He then reported the athar in which Al Hasan Al Basrī (رحيم الله) was asked by Salām Ibn Miskīn (رحيم الله),

“Should I enjoin good upon my parents and forbid them from evil?” He replied, “Advise them if they accept. But if they do not respond, then be silent about them”
(Masā’il Harb)

Imām Ahmad (رحيم الله) also said,

“If a man sees his father upon a matter, he dislikes he should teach him with neither harshness nor offense, nor should he speak roughly to him. Otherwise, he should leave him alone, for the father is not like a stranger”
(Al Ādāb Ash Shar’iyyah – Ibn Muflih)

Abul ‘Abbās Ibn Qudāmah (رحيم الله) listed the levels of hisbah (enjoining good and forbidding evil) as:

informing the ignorant person, admonishing with kind speech, harshness and cursing (by saying “O jāhil” or “O fool”), prevention with force in relation to the tools of the sin not the sinner himself (by pouring out the alcohol, destroying the musical instruments, etc.), and threatening to beat the sinner and actually beating him (which can only be done by those with authority over the sinner).

He (رحيم الله) then said,

“The son can use from these levels of hisbah: informing [his ignorant parents that such and such is a sin], then gently admonishing and advising them, and from the fourth level of hisbah, he can break their musical instruments, pour their alcohol out, and so on”
(Mukhtasar Minhāj Al Qāsidīn)

“He is not allowed to practice hisbah on them with curses, harshness, threats, or physical beatings”
(Al Ihyā’)

This discussion clarifies that abuse of one’s parents is not permissible when making da’wah to them or practicing hisbah on them.

We ask Allah to make us from those who thank Him and thank their parents. We also ask Him to guide our parents to His straight path.